



FEMA

Kennebunk Acquisition, Demolition, and Elevation

York County, ME - Sitting on the banks of the Mousam River in Kennebunk, Maine on a lazy summer's day, you could never imagine the torrent that repeatedly floods the Intervale neighborhood. But during heavy rains, stormwater often overflows the river banks and floods 18 houses; 12 of these houses are along the river, and six are inland across Intervale Road.

This neighborhood has a history of flooding that goes back to 1953 with six reported events. None of the properties had flood insurance. Forty-two residents are directly affected, but the downstream effect from the flooding of this neighborhood is much greater, causing pollution from septic, oil, gas, asbestos, etc. It has had a ripple effect on neighbors, schools, businesses, municipal, and utility services.

The Town of Kennebunk decided after much town and neighborhood input that the only viable solution was to remove the willing homeowners from the floodplain either through buyouts or elevations.

The plan of action was for the town to apply for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grant provides funds to states, Indian tribes, and local governments for long-term hazard mitigation projects following a major disaster declaration. Under this program FEMA pays up to 75 percent of the project cost. Either the state or the applicant covers the remaining 25 percent.

The grant was applied for in September 2007 and awarded in December 2007. The grant was for the acquisition and demolition of three houses and the elevation of eight houses. The demolished houses were burned down as both a training exercise for new fire recruits and as an opportunity to test the mutual aid abilities of area fire departments in a safe environment.

The cost of the project was \$1,503,875 the town paid the total local share of \$375,969. The project is 98 percent complete except for some final landscaping.

Now that the work is done, the Intervale neighborhood is once again an idyllic 1960s enclave of families and neighbors with a couple of new pocket parks that even have access to the Mousam River, which affords a variety of recreational opportunities.

Kennebunk officials report no more flooding problems in this neighborhood as of February 2009.



York County,
Maine



Quick Facts

Year:

2007

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$1,503,875.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)